

Chapter 6 of the Apocalypse of St. John.

This chapter focused of the profound theme of God's final judgment upon the world. In this chapter our Lord begins to open the seven seals. This opening of the seals corresponds to the revelation of God's divine plan. Jesus is the ultimate revelation of the Father and has come to make known the Father's will. In this passage, the opening of the seals and the Father's will involve judgments upon sinful mankind for our rejection of His truth.

Contained within this apocalyptic imagery is the reality that God, as the ultimate designer and creator of the world, has placed within His creation logic, order, beauty and truth. The rejection of these truths by man -ipso facto- brings about self-inflicted pain, suffering, disaster and destruction. One who rejects God's truth brings pain to himself (even if he doesn't know its true), just as surely as one who rejects (or doesn't know of) the "laws of electricity" and puts a metal object into an outlet. As St. Paul states, all of creation was subjected to futility through the sin of man and creation groans and travails until it can be delivered from its bondage to death and decay brought by the sin of man (cf. Rom 8:19-22).

So in the dispensing of God's judgments upon the world, these scourges can be seen as emanating from within the natural order of the world itself. This reality is symbolized by the four living creations (see OSB note 4:6-7) which in this chapter bid the judgments to "come." Sin inherently impacts our lives (and those around us) whether we know it is sin or not (and whether we believe it is sin or not). This is why Eastern Christians pray for forgiveness of our sins "known and unknown." As St. John states, "All wrongdoing is sin" (1 Jn 5:17). This is also why Christians must live and proclaim God's truth, "in season and out of season" (1 Tim 4:2-4), and must not support evil (or be indifferent towards it).

We know that the immorality being promoted by our society will inherently bring about more pain, suffering, disaster and destruction to us all. This is the background for this chapter on God's Divine Judgment. Our class notes follow below.